DIOCESE OF OXFORD
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire
www.oxford.anglican.org
September 2017 no 294
the door

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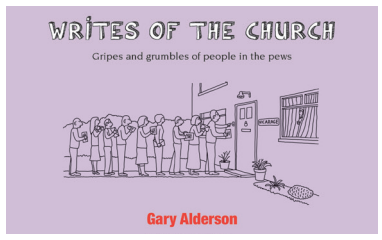


Win a book - page 5

Bishop considers the appliance of science

by *Jo Duckles*

CHRISTIANS must think seriously about the implications of developments in artificial intelligence (AI).

That is the message from the Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft, as he joins the Government's Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence. AI is a relatively new field where machines develop some of the qualities of the human mind.

"I think it's really important for the Church's voice to be heard on contemporary issues which are going to change the whole nature of society, and this is one of them. Artificial intelligence is going to change all of our lives. Lots of us interact with Siri and Alexa," said Bishop Steven.

Siri is the voice control system on iphones and ipads. Alexa is a voice-controlled Bluetooth speaker that, as well as streaming music, can be used to create shopping lists, check the weather, surf the web and even order takeaways.

"Our data is made available to multi-national companies and sometimes we are not aware that is happening. There are privacy issues, but probably the biggest impact is to be on the future of work. It will affect all of us and our children and grandchildren," said Bishop Steven.

"There was a news story in July about a robot vacuum cleaner, which sounds like a helpful item for the home, but it was making maps of our houses and sending them to big companies. When that happens it becomes a tremendous invasion into our privacy. Then I read a really interesting book last year that stated that every advance in AI is raising questions about what it means to be human. The Church must be at the forefront of helping people with this. God became human and our faith has profound things to say about being human."

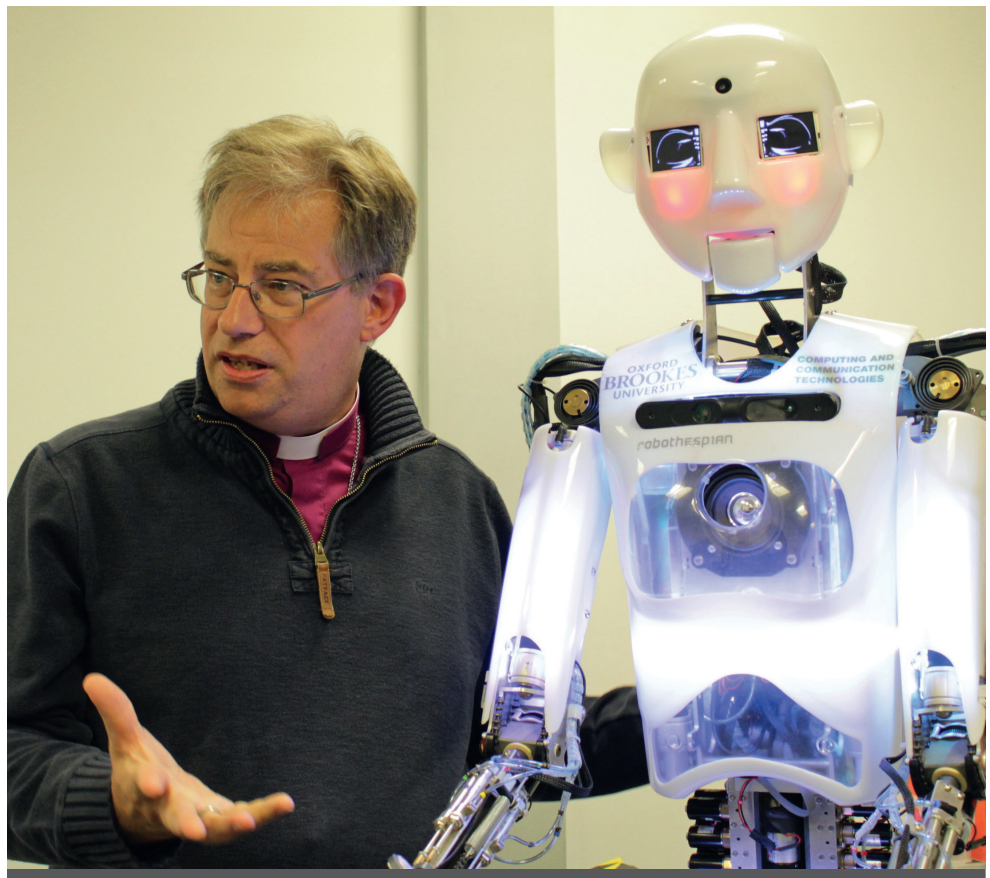
The Select Committee has been appointed to consider the economic, ethical and social implications of advances in artificial intelligence. It will start taking evidence in the autumn and report back by 31 March 2018. Bishop Steven took his seat in the House of Lords as the Bishop of Oxford last year. He has been one of the 26 Lords Spiritual (Bishops who serve in the Lords) since 2013.

In the meantime, Bishop Steven has urged church-goers to keep informed about advances in AI. "It is a rapidly developing field. I think there will be legislation in this Parliament about data protection and it's important to keep on top of that. We are going to be reflecting as a diocese this year about what it means to be a more contemplative, compassionate and courageous Church. At the heart of that reflection we will be thinking about what it means to be more human and more like Jesus Christ."

Bishop Steven has also been invited to a conference exploring how science can be a resource in the professional work of religious leaders and theological educators. The conference takes place this month at Oxford University. It is the final event of a project funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation and will explore how science can be enriching to faith in God.

A 'robothespian' named Artie is one of several artificial intelligence projects at Oxford Brookes University Department of Computing and Communication Technologies. Artie can interact with humans, sing and act out scenes from films. Bishop Steven met Artie and other robots and saw projects under development during a recent visit to Brookes. These include projects to help medical and military professionals do their jobs more safely and efficiently.

The Bishop has also been invited to the Oxford Robotics Institute, part of Oxford University, which is also developing pioneering technologies and robotic systems, including driverless cars and robots that can guide people, robots for transportation and delivery services and even long-range planetary exploration.



Bishop Steven meets Artie the Robothespian at Oxford Brookes University. *Photo: Jo Duckles*

Find out more:

- Brookes University: **cct.brookes.ac.uk/research/isec/artificial-intelligence/** Oxford Robotics Institute: **http://ori.ox.ac.uk**
- The Royal Society is examining the potential of machine learning in the next five to 10 years. For more see: **https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/machine-learning/**
- The Government Select Committee on AI **www.parliament.uk/ai-committee**
- Watch the Oxford Brookes robots here: **www.oxford.anglican.org/robots**

Youth camp is a "knockout" weekend of fun and faith

THE diocesan youth camp "Yellow Braces" was a glorious weekend of faith, fun and community at the Hill End Outdoor Centre near Oxford.

Young people from around the diocese threw themselves into the activities of the weekend, literally when it came to the "It's a knockout" obstacles (pictured above).

As well as the traditional waterballoon volleyball and other madcap activities there was time in dorm groups exploring life and faith; and our worship gathering where we looked at a 'life fully lived' looking at what it meant to be Christ-like in contemplation, compassion and courage.

Next year's Yellow Braces is 6 to 8 July. Ian Macdonald (Diocesan Youth Adviser) is very happy to come to your group or church to chat about how you can be part of it. Email youthofficer@oxford.anglican.org to contact Ian. ***Photo: Ian Macdonald.***

Summer holiday fun for children

Knights entertain children in Charlbury. *Photo: Paddy Gallagher*

ALMOST 50 holiday clubs gave children the chance to have fun and learn about the Christian faith at churches in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire over the summer holidays.

Knights and castles was the theme of a club at St Mary's, Charlbury, west Oxfordshire during the first week in August. The club, organised by Churches Together in Charlbury, saw St Mary's converted into a castle using a huge amount of cardboard donated by the community. Around 70 children took part.

In Eynsham, also in Oxfordshire, a holiday club run by churches had not taken place for 15 years until it began again last year. More than 50 children attended "Maker Fun Factory" in the mornings of the first week of the school holidays.

A team of 30 teenagers, sixth formers, students, teachers and seniors was drawn from Anglican, Baptist and Catholic Churches in the benefice which covers two villages. On arrival children passed through a 'car-wash' with bubbles. An 'assembly' with songs started the mornings off. Each day had a Bible memory verse, illustrated in 20-minute sessions of games, a craft imagination station, homemade snacks, a video and dramatic retelling of bible stories such as the spies in Jericho, and Gideon and the 300. Crews won points for effort, noise, memory, saying 'thank you', original handshakes and winning races.

On the website

For more photos see **www.oxford.anglican.org/2017holidayclubs**

Diocesan schools trust continues to grow

PICTURED are business managers from 25 of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust schools. These included managers from Dr Radcliffe's CE School in Islip and South Moreton Community School.

The photo was taken at a summer training day at Oxford's Kassam Stadium. David Locke, the chief operating officer for ODST, said: "The school business managers and support staff at the schools are a talented group of individuals who are essential to the continued progress and sustainable development of our family of schools." Since the training day Kidmore End CE School and Deddington CE School have joined ODST, taking the total number of schools in the trust to 27. Celebration ceremonies will take place at the schools that have recently joined the trust in September.

On the website

For more on the trust go to **www.odst.org.uk/**

Awards for high performing academy

A PRIMARY school has been awarded silver and bronze awards for the work it does around RE in the curriculum.

Curzon Church of England Combined School in Penn Street, near Amersham, was assessed by an RE Quality Mark inspector in early summer. The school's regular RE lessons gained high praise, as did the Christian distinctiveness of the institution.

Pupils also demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of religions and, through the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), enjoyed visits to a Mandhir, a Sikh Temple, and a Jamia Masjid Mosque in the Slough and Maidenhead areas. This also enabled strong links to be forged for the school.

The school also credits recent improvements to courses attended by staff, led by schools advisors from the Diocese of Oxford and the local authority.

Building work underway in Bedgrove

From left are: the Revd Martin Kuhrt, the vicar; Bishop Steven; Paul Tofield (the building contractor; Roger Harwood the architect and Robin Scott, church warden.

BUILDING work is underway at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Bedgrove in Aylesbury. Earlier in the summer Bishop Steven blessed the project to turn the church into a hub for the community.

When completed it will have a new entrance, a new kitchen/servery, disabled toilets, lounge and upper room.

Returning from Embo

TWO members of Church House Oxford staff, Caroline Todd and Claire Barratt, recently visited the Embo Community in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa as part of a volunteer team with the charity Medic Assist International.

The trip was led by John Earwicker who was featured in *the Door* in June 2016. The charity's vision is to provide access to healthcare to those in need where it is currently not available and one of their projects has been to work with the church in Embo since 2009 to provide much-needed care to those with HIV, Aids and tuberculosis. In 2014 MAI facilitated the building of a clinic in the church grounds which now has over 3,000 treatments per month and recently completed an extension allowing tuberculosis patients to be seen separately. See w**ww.oxford.anglican.org/supporting-medic-assist-international/** for a fuller report.

Twyford's Jenny named "Citizen of the Year"

From left, Daniel Taylor, Chairman of Twyford Together, Jenny Hay, receiving her award, and John Bowley, Vice Chairman of Twyford Parish Council. *Photo: Chris Hay*

JENNY Hay, who worships at St James, Ruscombe in Berkshire, was awarded Twyford Parish Council Citizen of the Year 2017. She has served as a Piggott Senior School governor, church warden at both St Mary's, Twyford and St James, Ruscombe, at different times, served on both the PCC as lay vice chair and Deanery Synod in addition to previously being the church accounts bookkeeper and the Mother's Union branch leader. For many years, she was also a Polehampton Swimming Pool supervisor on a Friday afternoon.

Her daughter, Lizzy Steele, said: "I believe that her nomination for this award is due to long service helping and serving the community through Noah's Ark Toddlers Group, a church-supported and run initiative held at Twyford United Reformed Church on Tuesday mornings. Jenny has been doing this since before Matthew, her grandson (now nearly 13), was born. She unlocks the church and gets toys out before the committed team serve drinks and snacks, read stories and play games before it is all tidied away once again."

South Africa summit to explore discipleship

From left, Fr Tefo Motaung, Fr Elias Tsabeng, Revd Heather Steenkamp and Maranda St John Nicolle in Kimberley and Kuruman. *Photo: Catharine Morris*

WHAT does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? And how do people in very different contexts walk together as partners in the gospel?

These are the questions that over fifty people from our diocese and our link diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman will be discussing together at a summit in Kimberley, South Africa, from 14-18 September. The summit brings together representatives of linked parishes, young people, and people with leadership roles within the link and within the two dioceses, including both diocesan bishops.

Participants will engage together in prayer and Bible study. They'll visit different parishes for Sunday worship and explore the history of Kimberley so as to better understand the context of the Kimberley and Kuruman Diocese today. And they'll discuss a series of questions relating to mission: Why and how do we cherish God's creation? What are the things in our church life that engage - or don't engage - young people? How do we discuss and respond to inequalities that distort right relationships in our families, church and society?

Our prayer is that the time together will deepen both diocese's understanding and love of God and each other, help us to grow as disciples of Christ, and make our partnership both deeper and wider.

All are welcome to join in through using the conference prayer at **http://pwm.oxford.anglican.org/oxford-kimberley-kuruman-link/** and following **#KandKOxford** and **#JourneyingTogether** on Twitter, and looking on the front page of **www.oxford.anglican.org** for the latest news.

Shoe donations put Kenyan pupils' education on a solid footing

A SLUMLAND school in Kenya has been helped by a Buckinghamshire school after a fundraising effort by pupils and staff.

St Paul's Church of England Combined School in Wooburn Green has forged strong links with the Walk Centre church and school in Nakuru, Kenya, which is a not-for-profit organisation helping children of the Hilton slums by providing the basic human rights of education and regular meals.St Paul's school supports the Walk Centre by collecting shoes and clothes that are taken to Nakuru children by members of St Paul's church.

The Harvest Festival service in October was focussed on the centre, with each pupil donating a second-hand pair of shoes and new pair of socks. These items were taken out to Nakuru in April where they were gratefully received by the children. From September, St Paul's School will be sponsoring a child from the Walk Centre to attend high school, and complete the next stage of their education.

Pictured right is Wullie Wilson, the chair of governors at Wooburn Green, with a van of shoes and socks collected at last year's Harvest Festival and bound for Kenya.

Welcoming Grant in his dual role with the diocese and cathedral

A NEW Diocesan Canon Precentor will be installed at Oxford's Christ Church Cathedral this month.

The Revd Dr Grant Bayliss has been Director of Theological Studies at Ripon College Cuddesdon since 2011, before which he was Chaplain of St John's College, Cambridge. As Diocesan Canon Precentor he will be taking on a new role with dual responsibility for the cathedral's liturgy and for theological education and formation across the diocese as a member of the team for Initial Ministerial Training.

Grant will be joined at Christ Church by his wife Chris and their daughters Beth and Sarah. His installation takes place on 2 September. The Dean of Christ Church, Martyn Percy, and the Director of Mission for Oxford Diocese, Andrew Anderson-Gear, said "We are delighted to have appointed Grant to this new post. He is an experienced theological educator, and has done a marvellous job in running the liturgy at Cuddesdon during his time there. He will be a great asset to the cathedral and the wider diocese."

The Revd Dr Grant Bayliss writes, "I'm excited to be called to this new role which combines two of my great passions - for worship and for formation. I look forward to working with the excellent teams in the mission department and the cathedral but also to forging new relationships across the diocese."

Join Ride and Stride 2017

AS fans gear up to watch the pro cyclists speed through Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire during the Tour of Britain race, another high profile event to raise money for historic churches will be taking place across the Diocese of Oxford.

The annual Ride and Stride will take place on Saturday 9 September when people of all levels can pedal, hike or horse ride around as many churches as possible. For historic churches trusts, this is the major fundraiser of the year and brings in vital funds for churches in need of repair. Last year Oxfordshire fielded their youngest ever participant, three-month old Sebastian, (aided and abetted by his mum) while at the other end of the spectrum, 94-year-old Muriel walked to twelve churches around Oxford.

Joint patron, the Rt Revd Andrew Proud, Bishop of Reading, says: "Wherever you go in our counties, on hilltops, nestling in the folds of hills, or on the bends in rivers, you will find a beautiful, historic church, waiting to be discovered. Ride and Stride is a wonderful way to enjoy some of our beautiful countryside and discover some of these gems for yourself. Please help us keep our churches open, not only today, but for our grandchildren's children, too."

Information is available on the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust websites or via the national Ride and Stride website **www.rideandstrideuk.org.**

Advertising

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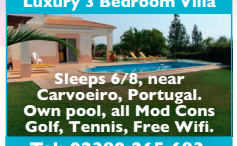

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thedoorpost

Events in September

The Doorpost is a free service for churches to advertise their events and is designed to be hung on church noticeboards. Please send your events to doorpost@oxford.anglican.org or by post to Church House. The deadline for the October issue is **Monday 4 September.**

SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

Upton: Village Fete, 1pm at the Recreation Ground. Blewbury Band, Bake Off competition, donkeys, cartoonist, car boot sale, dog show, gymnasts, Juggling John. Entrance £1. General enquiries: Jessie@blueshapes.com; Car boot/dog show enquiries: Gloria 07845 761560. In aid of St Mary's Church/Upton Village Hall.

Buckingham: Organ Recital with Robert Tucker performing works by Handel, Bach, Marchand and Mendelssohn. St Peter and St Paul's Church, 7.30pm. Tickets £10 (under 18s free) from the church office, 01280 821509. Proceeds to developing community outreach.

Saunderton: Ellel Ministries Training Day: 'Bringing the Essentials of the Healing Ministry of Jesus into the Local Church' with David and Denise Cross. The Clare Centre, 9.30am – 5.15pm. £28 including lunch. For more information or to book contact roy.be@phonecoop.coop.

THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

Penn: Holy Trinity Church Heritage Open Day, 11am – 4pm (also Friday 11am – 4pm, Saturday 10am – 5pm, Sunday 1–5pm, bell tower from 2pm).

FRIDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

Chinnor: Free Art Exhibition and sale of watercolours by R. K. Scopes in aid of Chinnor Christian Aid. Methodist Church, 62 Station Road, 10am – 4pm with refreshments and light lunches. Also on Saturday 9 September.

SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

Tilehurst: Last Night of the Proms in the St Michael's Morlais Room, 7.30pm. Tickets £7.50 per person or £20 for a family of four, to include supper. Contact Eileen White, 0118 942 0629, to book.

Chearsley: Country walk and pub lunch for clergy spouses organised by OxonSpice, the clergy spouse network. See https://oxonspice.wordpress.com.

Bicester: St Edburg's Church Heritage Day, 'History Comes to Life', 10am – 5pm. Family and adult trails, displays, historical re-enactments at 2.00 and 3.30pm. Refreshments. Free entry.

SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

Oxford: Social Justice Fair at Summertown United Reformed Church, 10am – 3.30pm. Stalls by Asylum Welcome, Getting Heard, Prison Fellowship, Emmaus, Community Emergency Food Bank, NOAAH, The Porch, Gatehouse, Aspire, Oxford City of Sanctuary and others. Talks, music, film, cakes, children's activities.

Bisham Concert Band , performing on 23 September.

Botley: Food Fayre, St Peter and St Paul's Church, 10am – 4pm. Quality artisan and locally sourced food, children's entertainments, a baking competition, cookery demonstrations and live music. Entry £1, under 16 free. Proceeds to the church and Helen and Douglas House. For further information contact Judith on 01865 435343 or judithdtbowden@virginmedia.com.

SUNDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

Spencers Wood: Carnival Praise service in the Marquee on the Rec, Clare's Green Road, 11am. St Michael and All Angels and Shinfield Baptist Church join together to celebrate being part of the community and to thank volunteers at Caf'Active.

FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER

Watlington: Harvest Barn Dance, 7pm, St. Leonard's Church. Tickets £10, children £5, family £25, on sale at Watlington High Street Drop-in Centre or www.ticketsource.co.uk/stleonardschurch. More details from 01491 612082 or moreeventsstleonards@gmail.com.

Bicester: Start of three-day Flower Festival 'Nations within our Community', Catholic Church and John Paul II Centre. 10am – 5pm on Friday and Saturday, Sunday Multilingual Mass, 11am, followed by Food from Around the Globe lunch and Songs of Praise at 4pm.

SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

West Wycombe: Concert by the Bisham Concert Band in aid of the Motor Neurone Disease Association, St Lawrence Church, 7.30pm. Tickets £12, £10 concessions, £1 under 16s, available from Alison Rimmer: alir08@hotmail.co.uk.

SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

Weston Turville: Cream teas at St Mary the Virgin Church, 3–5pm. Contact Wendy Prestage on 01296 614699 for more information or visit www.stmaryswt.org.

Sonning: Young Voices Festival. Choristers aged 7 to 16 are invited to an afternoon of singing using the RSCM festival book *Songs of Praise the Angels Sang*. Church choirs, school choirs and individuals are all welcome. Free, but places must be booked in advance. For further details see www.rscm.com/area/berkshire/ or contact mary.delaney@btinternet.com or phone 0118 9403121.

FRIDAY 29 SEPTEMBER

Buckland: Playgrounds for Palestine (UK) Singing Day. Ladies are invited to rehearse for a day, and then give a free concert in St Mary's Buckland at 6pm. £30, including lunch. Further details: nicky@tcsp.net.

SATURDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

Woodley: Musical Spectacular at Woodley Baptist Church, 7pm. Starring award winning A440 choir, and young finalists from Woodley Music Festival. Tickets £10 in advance from 0118 327 7909 or £12 on the door. Proceeds to Urban Saints, a charity supporting 13 young people from Woodley going to build a house for a family in need in Soweto.

Musical Opportunities

Langtree Sinfonia is a friendly, non-auditioning orchestra. We meet on Wednesday evenings in Woodcote and provide an entertaining, encouraging atmosphere in which to play classical music. We give two concerts a year, in Dorchester Abbey and St Mary's, Wallingford, and have an annual workshop and a patron's evening of music and socialising. For more information see www.langtreesinfonia.co.uk or contact Nick Kiff, 01491 833515.

The Sine Nomine Singers of Oxford welcome new choir members. We occasionally sing evensong in churches in the diocese. We also sing at private celebrations, patronal festivals and conferences. We are a small, friendly group. We practise on Friday nights in Headington, 7.15–9.15pm. If you would like to join us, please contact director Richard Moller on 01865 763281 or 07986 235585 or Christine Kennell on 07962 798474.